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Statement of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) and Saferoads4teens Coalition in Support of Senate Introduction of the Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection (STANDUP) Act

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens in the United States across the country. This is a major public health and safety epidemic we can prevent.

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), a coalition of consumer, health and safety groups, and insurance companies and agents working together to make our roads safer, expresses strong support for today's introduction of the Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act (STANDUP) in the U.S. Senate by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and others. The Senate STANDUP bill is a companion bill to H.R.1895, introduced a year ago in the House of Representatives by Rep. Tim Bishop (D-NY), Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE), and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

Advocates and the Saferoads4teens coalition, consisting of more than 110 national, state and local groups representing teens, parents, emergency doctors and nurses, pediatricians, MADD, law enforcement, business leaders and safety activists across the country, thank Senator Gillibrand for her leadership on this issue. As a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, she and her committee colleagues have an unprecedented opportunity to stand up for teens and play a crucial role in helping to prevent the senseless and devastating annual death toll of young people in every state throughout the nation.

In 2008, more than 6,400 people died in crashes involving young, novice drivers. Teen drivers are far more likely than other drivers to be involved in fatal crashes because they lack driving experience and tend to take greater risks. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs introduce teens to the driving experience gradually by phasing in driving privileges over time and in lower risk circumstances. GDL laws have proven effective in saving young lives, but not all states require all aspects of an optimal GDL law.

The STANDUP Act would require all states to enact effective GDL laws that include certain minimum requirements for obtaining a driver's license and lifesaving restrictions on teens before they become fully licensed. The provisions in the legislation are based on recommendations by the National Transportation Safety Board, policy endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and extensive research on the effectiveness of comprehensive teen driving laws.

As an active member of the Saferoads4teens Coalition, Advocates is dedicated to the successful outcome of final passage of this crucial legislation.

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